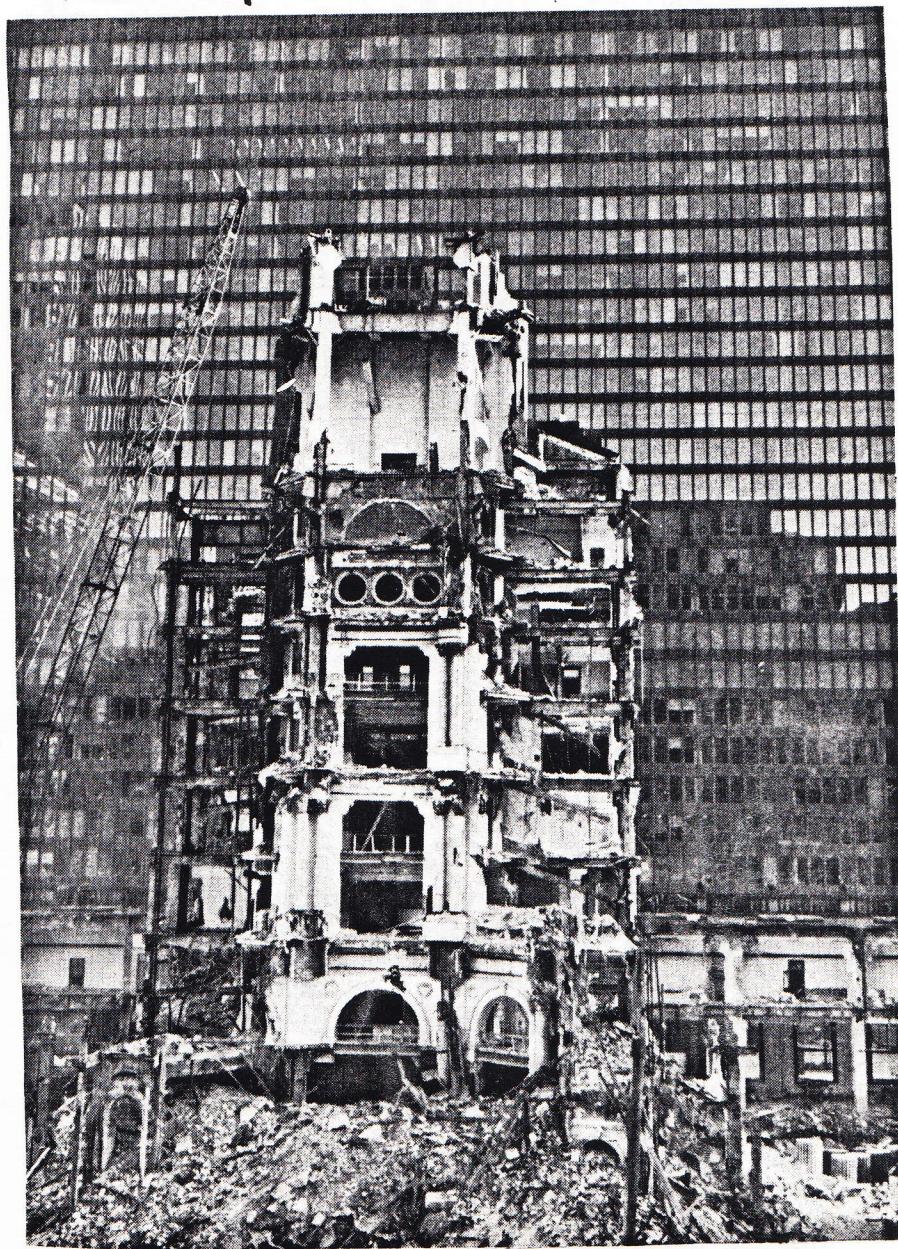
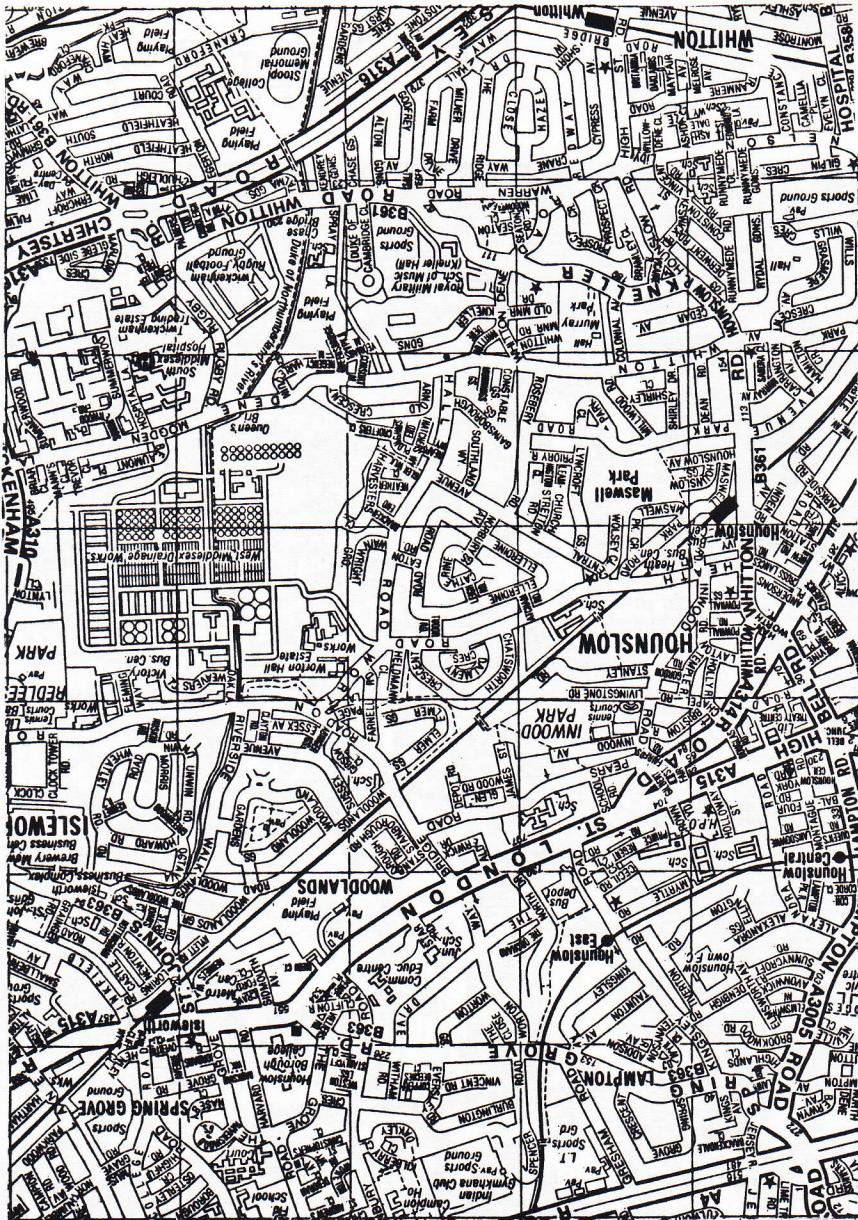


PUMP OF VARTRY



A Play In A FEW ACTS



pump OF vartry : frustration in Five acts.

written by john xerxes piche' with due apologies
offered to Herr Beckett and Herr Joyce.
dedicated with Love to Colleen and Jeremy.

"Do not kill:Reduce to slavery" - Bataille.
A joint Love Bunni/Forfeit Records presentation.
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please perform. dec.-jan. 93-94.

the players
RIEUX - stone.
MABLY - vigil.
ZELMIRE - enigma.
GODOT - salvation.
EMIL - absent.

ACT ONE

(The tiny room was hot. The wood floors were filthy. The wallpaper was sweating from its large buckling pours. The single ceiling light's illumination fought through a maze of cobwebs and dust strings. The corners of the room were crowded by the piles of corroded dirt, moldy papers of some importance, and articles of baby clothing. The only furnishings remained a large industrial desk and a long broken-down green couch. The desk was the kind that often inhabited high schools of forty or fifty years ago. Its tan metallic paint had lost its luster and had begun to flake, revealing the rotting metal innards once strong and healthy. The scratch-proof work space was battle scarred by holes and globs of hardened glue. The desk was the sheer embodiment of one large dent. The green couch had misplaced its legs in better days, so then sat supported off the floor by a large white brick, two paint cans, and three books stacked in a pile, the books were in ascending order *Les Miserables*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Webster's Dictionary, 1954 Edition*. The couch slouched against the far right wall. It constantly smelled, as well as felt wet, without really being so. The left arm of the couch was broken so that even the slightest pressure would send it reeling off to the side, unsupported. The cushions were torn displaying dull patches of wear. The room occupied a serene self-assuredness, as if it remained empty on purpose. The white paint-chipped wooden door flies open as RIEUX flashes to center stage.)

RIEUX - (hastily out of breath) I see. (pause. disguste disgustedly) No, this won't do for ANY of it.

(he begins a frantic pace around the room, naturally unaware and thereby avoiding the room's furnishings. He notices the door which remains open from his entrance. He ponders the possibilities, mouthing a silent script of mysterious implications. Brushing his hand through his hair, he sits down upon the floor.)

From here They may not see me. (Satisfied, he begins to relax. He stretches out upon the filth on the floor, wearily) No. This will not accommodate anything other than failure and frustration. (Rising both arms into the air) Now They may catch a glimpse. (He waits. He falls asleep, snoring loudly).

(MABLY's head pokes in through the open door. He does not seem to understand where the loud guttural snoring is coming from, he is visibly preplexed. He slowly begins to enter the room but thinks better of it. He moves in slow, calculated movements as if not to disturb the very air that surrounds him. He is upon the threshold of the room, his imposing shadow falls across the sleeping RIEUX, who becomes startled into wakefulness. The snoring stops yet RIEUX does not sit upright, his eyes open wide as he holds his breath. MABLY hesitates, he lifts his foot as if about to step into the room. RIEUX bolts upright.)

RIEUX - (yelling loudly) AH HA! I have you now, pedestrian foot-soldier! Surrender! All hope is lost!

MABLY - (bewildered) I have yet to enter, your grounds are not yet trespassed. The door was ajar, I will re-seal it as I leave you to it. (he turns to leave, his shadow withdraws).

RIEUX - (horrorified) No. (stammering) Please...come in, you startled me...that is...all. I am, I can not be held accountable for such a rude awakening! Please allow me to show a touch of hospitality. Please?

MABLY - (unsure) But...the room is small. I will close this door and leave you at it.

RIEUX - (soothingly) No, there is plenty of this room. Please join me. I will cook some lentils or offer you some tea? Please!

MABLY - I don't think so. I have places to see yet today. I am on a VERY tight schedule, afterall it IS almost noon...see? (he walks into the room pointing for Rieux to look at his loudly ticking watch).

RIEUX - (overjoyed) Oh bless my soul.

MABLY - Yes. It is rather a nice watch. It was a gift, you know, from that crazy woman downstairs. You, know, I think that lady maybe under some sort

delusion that we, she and I, are somewhat of, well, somewhat of an "Item."

RIEUX - (having walked away from the babbling Mably, now stands facing the south wall, fumbling about in the pocket of his suit coat vest) No. No. No. This won't do. How can there be a lentil supper when They removed the cooker? How can They expect a nice, lazy afternoon tea without giving me... (his voice fades as his mouth continues to move violently, appears to be shouting).

MABLY - That crazy woman downstairs told me to simply bypass this floor altogether. Said that it would amount to a colossal waste of precious time. She realizes the importance of the schedule. The contractual mood of such an adventure. Yes, she has the most beautiful voice of all of them - so sensual, so erotic. She shall make a lovely orator.

RIEUX - (presenting Mably with a silver chalice) Tea?

MABLY - (Distressed) Oh? Now there is a novel idea. (checking his watch) Not... really... tea time, ... though... is it? (looking at his shoes) Anyway I was just leaving. Have to see the whole upstairs before four. That is five floors with at least six rooms on each floor, thirty all told, you realize?

RIEUX - (still holding out the silver chalice) Tea?

MABLY - (taking the chalice) Aw due. (he drinks).

RIEUX - (walks over to the open door) Nothing to be done. Nothing to be sure.

MABLY - (sitting on the floor, leaning against the desk drinking his tea) She likens the whole adventure to a wonderful old movie. Not that I know anything about movies or such. I have too much to do. I believe that my record will attest to this. The time spent sitting in a darkened room watching the fictitious actions unfold via the flickering images of celluloid is a pointless time expenditure. One should be out THERE (hand vigorously points into the audience).

RIEUX - (anxiously) Please do keep it down. They might come back and I wouldn't want Them to hear that I have a guest. They are terrifically jealous of my good fortune. (Sitting down next to Mably) Here lie back, as you found me.

MABLY - (reclining) But the tea is not quite done, in addition I have the upper floors yet to see, I

have not the time to be wasting lying about on this filthy floor. The Schedule.

RIEUX - (shouting) Shut Up!

(SILENCE.)

MABLY - (meekly) The door is a jar...shall I re-seal it behind me? (He does not move.)

(The lights go dim. There is silence for two minutes. Before dawn, twilight, lighting is implied and cock crows three times.)

RIEUX - (bolting to his feet, racing around the tiny room just missing the furniture) I would very much like to brush my teeth.

MABLY - (agitated but immobile) Damn that urbane cock. Damn his thrice croaking lungs. Damn foolhearted luck of the lived long day. Damn the immortal spirit of the Monarchy!

RIEUX - (still pacing, violently twisting his hands together) How can I be so vain as to expect to be accommodated in my ambitions of personal hygiene?

MABLY - (rising both arms) Merovigian Dogs. Cadaver eaters. She could have at least suggested a warning about this nefarious distraction...NO, all she wanted to do was speak in tongues and tempt the gods. Damn her teasing! Damn her flirtatious advances! Had I exhibited a speck of gentlemanly composure - as if I had never been educated! - I would not be so wallowing now.

RIEUX - (agitated) My Teeth! MY TEETH! There has developed green moss upon my rosy gums and acid scum drips onto my precious tongue. MY TEETH! They rot!

They expect me to go mad from the lack of a sink.
(laughs violently).

MABLY - And a tooth brush.

RIEUX - (double-take, sadistically) Toothbrush? The hog now speaks? What is this vile nonsense you burp about, pig?

MABLY - Moreso, your lack seems inclusive of a toothbrush.

RIEUX - (sitting down in mock interest, feigning disbelief) Please do go on, friend.

MABLY - (slowly) Well... (suspiciously eyeing Rieux) Nevermind.

RIEUX - No fair there, friend. I distinctly heard you

blabbering some mention of a toothbrush, to what end?

MABLY - Well, (meekly excited) the lack of actually.

RIEUX - Ah ha. (bolting up, hands in the air) So now he condenscends. You are like all the Others! I finally see you with eyes open. You speak as They do. You dress as They do. For god's sake, you even smell as They do! (clenched fists raised) Fight me Carlos San Diego!

MABLY - (holding his head in his hands) She was...No she IS a wretched beast.

RIEUX - ARGH! (hands gripping his head) I can feel my teeth rotting out of my head. Is it bleeding? Am I bleeding from the mouth? Oh god, my teeth! (collapses to the floor, rolls up into a ball holding his mouth, rocking back and forth).

MABLY - (standing, walks over to the door, looks painfully out) Nothing to be done now I am frightened.

(So stay the two, both consumed within their own thoughts, an occasional moan escapes from the rocking ball of Rieux. Mably leans against the door, hands deeply thrust into his pockets, staring off stage. A school bell rings and the chaos of children's voices are heard above the din of a bellowing police siren. The two remain unmoved. The light slightly flickers on and off, bringing an upward head turn from Mably. He repositions himself in order to get a better look at the flickering illumination, he remains in the doorwell. A dark female silhouette is cast upon the far wall facing the door. Mably jumps in terror and falls to the floor, while Rieux, renewed, leaps to his feet.)

RIEUX and MABLY - SHE HAS COME!

(lights go out.)

END of ACT ONE

ACT TWO

(Lights come up. All three are sitting on the worn out couch. ZELMIRE couined between Rieux on her right and Mably on her left. The room remains unchanged, except for a great number of brown cardboard boxes stacked in three columns to the celing, down stage. There is a slight hum.)

ZELMIRE - (to Rieux) It has been a long time.

RIEUX - (staring straight ahead, emotionless, hands clasped upon his knees, sitting bolt upright) Indeed.

ZELMIRE - (to Rieux) You look well. Better than ever. Have you lost weight?

RIEUX - Indeed.

ZELMIRE - (placing her arm around Rieux's neck. Mably has grown red-faced, softly) It has been a long time.

MABLY - (pouting) No. This won't do. None of it.

RIEUX - (animated) Would you like some tea, Daphine? I still have some of your favorite, Lipton's.

MABLY - (agitated) ZELMIRE!

ZELMIRE - (to herself) How perfectly sweet.

RIEUX - (stands, adjusts his shirt and walks to face the back wall, he begins to fumble about) I see that They have removed the apparatus, good, it shall hence forth be easier to command the performance of tea. (His hands raise as he begins to mouth words without sound.)

MABLY - (holding his head) I must be mad.

ZELMIRE - (sniffing contemptously) You smell like semen.

MABLY - (slouched over, head on his knees) I know that I am mad.

ZELMIRE - (harsher expression) Disgusting little maggot, cumming in your own pants constantly. You smell sickening. (She spits on him) Repulsive loathsome insect!

MABLY - (weeping) I pray for death.

ZELMIRE - (licks her spit off Mably's neck passionately) There it is done. (Pulls Mably to her, embracing him.)

MABLY - So here we are.

ZELMIRE - (petting Mably's forehead, patting down his hair, caressing his cheeks) There, there. Nothing will happen to you. Shh. You are now safe. (Begins humming 'hush little baby'.)

RIEUX - (presenting a silver chalice) Claudia, tea?

ZELMIRE - (pushing Mably off her chest, he falls off

the couch by way of the broken arm, hits the floor with a dull thud) Oh bless my soul.

RIEUX - (sits down next to Zelmire, deeply engrossed) It has been a long time, hasn't it. A very long time, indeed.

ZELMIRE - (dispassionately) Not to sound ingreatful, Robert, but do you happen to have any of those wonderful African lentils?

RIEUX - (full of emotion) Just the other night I dreamt of you. Your long flowing red dress caught in the elevator door as you were exiting. I watched from the esclator, your struggle to remove your delicate dress from the grip of the door, trying patiently not to rip the expensive fabric. Do you still have the dress, Jillian?

ZELMIRE - (eye to eye, ignoring the whimperings of Mably) Up or down, Georgie?

RIEUX - (nodding) In Deed.

MABLY - (confidently stands) Mountains can be tunneled through, oceans sailed across, and rivers be damned! I know what was promised to me. I read the contracts. Studied them carefully. An endeavor of insect import! You both understood the nature of said contract. The schedule must and will be kept. Please, someone make the business of showing me the door!

ZELMIRE - (without removing her eyes from Rieux's splashes the contents of her tea cup into the face of Mably, who falls to the floor screaming and grasping his face) Xavier, it is so good to be home.

RIEUX - indeed.

MABLY - (redfaced and dripping wet, stands impetuously, raising an accusatory arm and leveling a pointedly sharp finger at the door shouts) THAT DOOR DAMMIT IS ALL THAT ALLOWS THIS SCENE TO CONTINUE, I WILL ENTERTAIN ACCOMPAINMENT BY WHICH I MAY TAKE MY LEAVE!

RIEUX - (drawing closer to Zelmire) The man-child needs attending to. He seems to have become afflicted by some suffering discontent. Volitle moods govern his manifest expressions, moreso he will only be silenced by the disclosure of a well-balanced and heart-rending fallaey, told with the utmost care for dramatic conviction. The ma'dame will bid me pardon.

ZELMIRE - (bored, yawning) Pity him, Robespierre. Pardon his infliction. Excuse his outbursts as a... revolting melodrama. Admit him into the fold. Go to him, do help him, dear.

MABLY - (dumbfounded as he listens to this exchange, confidently) As if I were nothing more than a painting hung for your conversation focus after dinner! The flickering light cast from your well burning hearth casting shadows which you claim add the dimension of movement to the gently applied brush strokes. It is as if the saviour never walked among us! As if the cock never crowed the third time! I will not allow this tapestry to unfold any further! Wretched beast of toilsome burden!

ZELMIRE - (rising to embrace Mably, gently) It is within your presence I feel security. It is by your existence that I am reassured of peace. It is you whom I love. (kisses the air in front of Mably's forehead, then violently knees his groin sending him straight to the floor with a wimpering thump. she turns her back on him so as to sit upon the couch.)

RIEUX - (skips over to the rocking, moaning ball of Mably) Indeed. (kicks Mably three times with great drama, flinging his arms wildly and his hair falls into his eyes. As each kick lands a cock's crowing is heard.)

ZELMIRE - (becoming openly more disgusted, stands, struts over to Mably, falls straddeling the groaning, squirming Mably. She pinns his arms to his sides. Full of spit and venom) Look at this insignificant wurm. There is no pleasure in such an easily procurred torture. No constitutional will.

RIEUX - (sitting upon the couch watching, his hands interlaced upon his lap) Do go on Shiva.

ZELMIRE - (gyrating sexually upon the trapped Mably) Your tea was splendid, mon senior.

RIEUX - (amazed) To behold the work in progress is praise enough. Magnificent! You are truly an artist, ma damn.

ZELMIRE - (suddenly stands, shakes her hair out over the near corpse of Mably, stretches languidly then walks proudly from the room.)

8.

MABLY - (meeekly) Victory is mine.

SILENCE

RIEUX - (bored) You realize how much she adores you?

MABLY - (still on his back) She teases me.

RIEUX - Possibility, gods forbid possibly. Really, you comfort her as no one else. I dare say you may even define her.

MABLY - Well might be. Yet she leads me on. Provoking then withdrawing, always hiding behind vague excuses. Regardless, she is involved with another.

RIEUX - Poor soul, his name?

MABLY - Why, sir, she constructs her most convincing excuses about her devotion to you.

RIEUX - Good god! Ah...well...no apologies.

SILENCE

RIEUX - It is only because you frighten her so.

MABLY - (disgusted) Rats!

RIEUX - You generate intesity.

MABLY - Nuts!

RIEUX - Can you go on?

MABLY - Haven't I been trying?

RIEUX - (nodding) You must continue.

MABLY - Of course...but...I won't.

RIEUX - Yet you want.

MABLY - Indeed.

RIEUX - Of course, but she...(fades off).

MABLY - (bolts to his feet, begins fixing his hair)

Enough games! Enough distractions! The schedule must be kept! I have expended the allotted time on mindless waywardness. I must press forward! FOREVER FORWARD! Press on I will. Press on I shall! Good morning!

RIEUX - yawns

SILENCE

RIEUX - Disgusting display, old boy.

MABLY - Possibly, yet admit, I almost had you that time.

RIEUX - True. True. Quite.

MABLY - Fancy she'll return?

RIEUX - Who?

SILENCE

MABLY - How are your teeth? Feeling any respite from the searing decay?

RIEUX - (stands full chested in high military ceremony, shouts) NEVER!

(Lights click out)

SILENCE

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

(A mid-morning haze breaks against the far back wall. Rieux is stretched out upon the moldly green couch, wearing only a pair of ratty blue pin striped underwear. Mably sits at the desk, his head slumped upon the desk top. A faint wind blowing about dry leaves is faintly heard in the background. There suddenly comes three sharp precise knocks, for the first time the door to the room is shut. Neither Rieux nor Mably seem to hear. After a short pause, three more intense knocks clang out. Again, neither sleeping man is disturbed. Finally, three loud bangs resonate like cannon blasts. Rieux turns upon his side. The door handle is heard jumbling, then the door creaks open, slowly bringing forth a flood of bright white light. The shadow of a man enters. GODOT is dressed in a three piece dead-pan blue flannel suit, a top hat, and a great coat. He has long grey hair and a finely trimmed goatee. He carries one in each hand, a leather brief case and a duck head walking stick. He carefully places the brief case by the door. He surveys the landscape of the room while walking past the huddled form of Mably he tosses the other's hair, then wipes his hand upon a white hankerchief. Godot slowly makes his way over to the corner where Rieux conjours up the tea, after a short bit with his back to the audience he turns around holding a cup of simmering tea. Godot positions himself in the dead center of the room, sips his tea, then smiles broadly as he raps his walking stick three times upon the floor. Rieux jumps from the couch, looking disorientated and annoyed. Mably bolts to his feet, banging his knees upon the underside of the desktop. He cries out in pain.)

GODOT - (calmly refined english accent) Gentlemen...

Good Morning.

RIEUX - (Stumbles over to Mably, softly) Who is the fruit roll?

MABLY - (rubbing his eyes) Is he speaking at us?

GODOT - (still facing the audience) Gentlemen, I apologize to have kept you waiting so long out here in the wilderness. I commend your diligence and appreciate your vigil. You have proven your utmost loyalty, by which I am greatly moved...

almost to tears. Yes, your show of faith makes me weep. (begins to feign the act of crying. Rieux and Mably look from this disgusting display to one another's astonished expressions there is no explanation to be found. Quickly Godot snaps) Enough...Let us be done with this place. Gather up your megear belongings so that we may take our flight. Be quick about it. Chop

Chop. (his walking stick cracks the floor like a snapping whip, neither Rieux nor Mably move.)

MABLY - Ask him if we couldn't take his coat.

RIEUX - It would be the very least we might do.

MABLY - Now that he has found his own source of tea.

RIEUX - There are always the lentils?

MABLY - And risk offense?

RIEUX - Indeed. (finger raised weekly) Sir? Sir, might we take your coat? Sir. He seems deaf...

MABLY - (standing behind Godot, in the process of helping him take off the greatcoat) There is a good man.

GODOT - Thank you, young man. You are quite kind for a man in your position. Now tell me how long it will take you and your partner to gather up your belongings, in other words, how soon may we depart from this dreadful place?

MABLY - Your hat, boos?

GODOT - Why...my hat...yes, of course...

RIEUX - (anxiously) His rod! Get a hold of that damned walking stick!

MABLY - What!? And have the old chap fall down?

GODOT - No doubt on my face...

MABLY - and such a distinguished face at that.

RIEUX - But the staff...it...is...

GODOT - (walks over to the couch, sits down) The young stable boy tells me of your willingness to offer services.

RIEUX - Have you seen my pants?!

MABLY - Fancy a stable boy referring to us.

GODOT - Quite right. He babbles on about mules and pigs most of the day. To no end his jibberish constantly flutters about, of course, he has not yet reached the age where girls hold his attention. Still one would hope that maturity might soon snap some sense into him so as to quite his inane yipping.

MABLY - The woman downstairs, have you encountered the pleasure of her introduction?

RIEUX - (gasping) My pants...

GODOT - (sipping from his chipped tea cup) Never in my wide range of travels have I encountered such a delightful variety of tea.

RIEUX - (pointing his finger at Mably) Sir, that maggot has stolen my pants!

MABLY - Oh bless my soul.

GODOT - (standing in shock) This man stands naked before the Law, while you, sir, (pointing at Mably) stand draped in accusation! What is your defense?

MABLY - (dumbfounded) My defense?

RIEUX - (bouncing up and down, clapping his hands together) I demand justice...JUSTICE!!

GODOT - How do you plead?

MABLY - (confused) But...these...these are MY pants.

GODOT - Guilty. (raps his stick. to Rieux) Take your pants back my good fellow. Trust that justice is yours.

MABLY - Appears more as vengeance.

RIEUX - Heretic. (strips Mably of his pants)

MABLY - (to Godot) This man has stolen my pants!

GODOT - Good God. (points to Rieux who is in the process of putting on Mably's pants) How am I expected to ignore this plighted man's plea? Tell me...

RIEUX - Good judge, that man is a convicted thief and a known liar. Thereby, he is incapable of any valid claim on property, for his possession of said material objects must be taken at the expense of another. Moreso, since he speaks with the venom of the serpent's forked tongue, he is incapable of recounting any statement which is not grounded in utter treachery. Ignore this man! You will discover everyone is much better off for you having done so. (Godot embraces Rieux)

MABLY - (discovering Rieux's bunched pants in the corner) Victory is mine.

GODOT - (sitting, notices the filth that surrounds him) Your Bags? They are not packed?

RIEUX - Might I suggest that our guest remove his shoes, for he might be weary after such a long trek.

MABLY - Hardly possible. It is afterall only the second floor. Only two hundred and fifty-six steps, not including the corridors nor underpass. I have it all written down for me in my schedule brochure

(fumbles in his pants pockets) which seems to have remained in the pants which Rieux wears. Oh nevermind.

RIEUX - (helping Godot undo his shoe's laces) Sire, might we offer you the couch for the night? We realize that it is not the comfort that you are accustomed to but it is the highest luxury we have to offer.

GODOT - (placing his hand just above the kneeling: Rieux's head) Thank you my leige, but I trust that I will be gone with the sun.

MABLY - Ha!

GODOT - Yes, I suspect that by night fall I will be well on the way.

MABLY - Night does not fall. Night creeps upon the day slowly devouring her. I would say that night "descends," yes, that makes more sense.

GODOT - (stretches out) Gentlemen, your belongings? Are they almost in order? (closes his eyes and immediately begins to snore like a donkey)

RIEUX - (rubbing his head) Nothing to be done now.

MABLY - Nothing indeed! We must now WAIT.

RIEUX - (excitedly) Yes! Hold a vigil for our sleeping guest!

MABLY - (bored) Sleeping beast.

RIEUX - (in awe) Oh when shall he rise again?

MABLY - I really was not expecting such a strange encounter with Fate.

RIEUX - Really? What then did you expect to encounter you?

MABLY - Desire.

RIEUX - Well, then... (startled) ..DESIRE! ? (begins to laugh)

MABLY - (chuckling to himself) Indeed.

(Lights click out, suddenly. Total deadening blackness

for a few minutes as rustling sounds of a busy stage crew are heard re-arranging furniture.)

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

(Everything remained as it was. Godot loudly sores up upon the couch, Rieux stands with his back to the audience and slightly to the right of Godot's head. Mably sits cross-legged, lotus style, facing the audience slightly to the left of Godot's feet. Zelmire sits with her feet upon the desk.)

ZELMIRE - (yawns loudly) Sweet Jesus was never this bored.
MABLY - (excitedly, without expression, eyes firmly closed)

She has returned!

ZELMIRE - (walking over behind the couch, amusingly examining Godot) What a disgusting specimen...
(sniffs loudly) even smells of congealed perfume, the hidden scent of humanity... (pokes her probing finger into Godot's chest) feels real enough though... is It still... you know...
(wrinkles her nose)... ALIVE?

RIEUX - (slapping at Zelmire's hand) Filthy beast, you leave this Good Man alone...

GODOT - (stirs, sits up, places his feet upon the floor begins to rub his head. Rieux and Zelmire continue to slap at one another, sleepily) Children. Dear Children. (their activity intensifies, yelling) CHILDREN! This is NO WAY to behave in the house! If you do not STOP this very instant, I will be forced to PUNISH the BOTH of YOU! WITHOUT CONDITION OR MERCY!!

(Rieux withdraws looking frightened, Zelmire spits one last time at the retreating Rieux, the slivia glob lands upon Godot's shirt)

ZELMIRE - (flinging herself upon the couch next to Godot)
You are a Curiosity.

GODOT - (looking away, disinterested) Where are my shoes?

ZELMIRE - (running her fingers through Godot's hair) It is an intrigue. It is so very old, so very frail, and smells of gaudily contained... Death.

RIEUX - (walks over to the Tea Wall, begins conjuring)
To begin anew...

ZELMIRE - Fancy such a thing as this falling into the hands of these two absurd ruffians? The irony of the genteel, rests fundamentally within the context of its surroundings, and this here (pokes Godot) is definitely drowning without even the realization of being submerged in water.

RIEUX - (handing Godot a cup of tea) Sur?

GODOT - (accepts the tea, upon tasting it he spits it

out in a spraying violent burst right into the chest of Rieux. Zelmire belly laughs) This is a grave insult to India!

RIEUX - (formally) Yes sur. Thank you, sir.

ZELMIRE - (standing, slaps Rieux) To even think...I could...have...

RIEUX - (blankly, eyes fixed at the approaching distance)

Indeed.

GODOT - (wiping his chin) I still await the prompt arrival of my shoes.

RIEUX - (bows, turns upon his heel) Sir, yes, sir. Right away.

GODOT - (to Zelmire) Dear child? Would you be a darling and rub my right shoulder? There seems to a nicking pain, which I am unable to remedy by the reach of my own hand.

ZELMIRE - It dares to address me? Curious development of bold advent... (thinking) do I dare address It directly? I fear...recognition.

GODOT - (pleading anxiously) Dear girl, I am in great need. Great painful, discomforting need. All I am asking...

ZELMIRE - It suffers?

GODOT - (quickly becoming sly) Oh Lord, yes!

ZELMIRE - Good. Yes, indeed. It will then... PAY dearly.

GODOT - Yes, oh Lord, yes. I will pay. Gladly...

ZELMIRE - (walks behind Godot) It is precious. (begins rubbing his Left shoulder)

GODOT - (groans) Yes, my sweet child...a bit Lower...

RIEUX - (presenting Mably's big black work boots) Your shoes, monsenior.

GODOT - There is a good man.

ZELMIRE - There is a fool.

MABLY - (alert and open-eyed for the first time, stands, utter wonderment) There are my boots!

(the Cock crows three times and church bells ring out. the lights fade slowly, the figures have not moved.)

End Of Act FOUR

the FINAL act.

(Billowing back lights come up on the empty stage. Grey curtains cover the floor and the back wall. A large blue chair sits center stage, an overweight middle-aged man enters from stage left. EMIL is dressed in a blue pinstriped flannel three piece suit, carrying a large poster tube and a bound stack of newspapers. He wears a dark respectable fedora with an oddly shaped feather stuck in it. He is humming mindlessly, he walks past the chair. Once a few paces past it he notices it with a sharp turn of his head, as if someone called out his name from behind. He pauses to consider it. First simply looking from a distance, then cautiously walking over and around it, examining it from every possible angle. After rocking it back and forth with his foot, he places the poster tube on the floor so that he may devote both hands to the direct and careful positioning of the bound stack of newspapers upon the seat of the chair. They sit a bit crookedly, hanging off the edge of the seat cushion. Emil slowly picks up the poster tube, removes the cap and takes out the frail yellowed poster. Walking to the back wall, he posts the wrinkled and ripped poster upon the wall, it hangs tilted to one side as if it is about to succumb to the pull of gravity. The poster's stark black and white graphic advertises the performance of Samuel Beckett's Waiting For Godot. The poster is splendid. Emil returns to center stage, reaches into the left breast pocket of his vest to remove a crumpled bit of folded paper. He gently unfolds it, then coughs three times. He looks intently out into the audience's vast darkness, seems bewildered and puzzled, acts as if he is about to walk away but changes his mind and begins his direct address...)

EMIL - (meekly but growing in confidence and granduer)

Er...So it is written, that those who seek shall never find; those who wait shall be forgotten; those who act will regret; those who think shall never understand; those who love shall be scorned; those who try shall only fail. So it is written that success is painted as disaster, so that those who meet it will not embrace it. To have built up the fortress of expectation, to have buried one self under the rhetoric of want, to have hoped - is in fact - to place dark blinders around one's eyes. The ideals of one's heart is the key to one's most telling deceptions.

See, here I have a mess of papers - filled with articles professing to enlighten the truth, yet I have to read any of them. For they are the path to deception. Is it better to have carried the weight of knowledge without actually comprehending it, or is it better to have bore the brunt of that same knowledge under the flag of confusion? To which Prophet will YOU obey? (long silence) Ladies and Gentlemen I thank you for your...er...patience.

(Emil turns his back to the audience, begins to carefully collect his mess. The house lights should come up. As soon as the papers are collected and the poster is re-rolled in its tube, Emil should leave via stage right. The play has ended.)

Curtain.